

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2094

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FOR ASST SECY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR HILL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR

SUBJECT: THIRD-COUNTRY ISSUES

REF: STATE 172095

1. THE INTERNAL POLITICAL CRISIS BESETTING ARGENTINA WILL ABSORB ITS ENERGIES AND ATTENTIONS FOR AT LEAST THE BALANCE OF THE CURRENT CLAENDAR YEAR. THUS, UNTIL ARGENTINA GETS ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER, MANY BILATERAL AND THIRD-COUNTRY ISSUES WILL GET SHORT SHIFT BOTH FROM POLICY MAKERS AND OPINION MOLDERS.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU RAISED, NONE ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE IN ARGENTINA. EARLIER IN THE YEAR WHEN GOA, ESPECIALLY FONMIN VIGNES, HOPED TO HOST THE MFM THESE QUESTIONS DID RECEIVE CLOSE ATTENTION. AS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A BA-MFM RECEDED SO TOO DID THE RELEVANCE OF THIRD-COUNTRY ISSUES.

3. AT PRESENT THE ARGENTINE VIEWS CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS: A) CUBA AND THE OAS--THE DISMANTLING OF THE SANCTIONS UNDER A "FREEDOM OF ACTION" FORMULA WILL BE WELCOMED HERE. THE GOA'S SHIFT TO THE RIGHT SINCE PERON'S DEATH

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AND GELBARD'S DOWNFALL MADE ITS "LEADERSHIP" ROLE ON CUBA

QUESTION VULNERABLE TO DOMESTIC ATTACK FROM TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVES. OAS ACTION WILL "LEGITIMIZE" GOA POSITION INTERNALLY AND WILL ALSO REDUCE CRITICISM FROM URUGUAY, PARAGUAY AND CHILE RE GOA'S RECOGNITION OF CUBA; B) US-CUBA MOVES--WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE MUCH REACTION ON THIS QUESTION. GOA AND PUBLIC BELIEVE US AND CUBA MOVING SLOWLY TO RENEW MORE NORMAL RELATIONS AND WILL VIEW ACTIONS AS LOGICAL STEPS IN PROCESS; C) AND D) NEW CANAL TREATY--IF A NEW TREATY IS SIGNED ARGENTINA WILL JOIN IN GENERAL HEMISPHERIC APPLAUSE. DOUBTLESS THEY WILL ATTRIBUTE SUCCESS TO HEMISPHERIC SOLIDARITY AND SIMILAR RHETORICAL FORMULATIONS. A BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS WOULD FIND ARGENTINA JOINING OTHER LA'S IN CRITICIZING US FOR FAILURE TO ACHIEVE NEW TREATY. BOTH RESPONSE ARE PREDICTABLE AND IN NEITHER CASE WOULD WE EXPECT GOA TO GET IN FRONT OF GENERAL LA LINE; E) OPEC EXCLUSION--THE ISSUE HAS DROPPED FROM PUBLIC VIEW AND FACT EXCLUSIONS NOT LIFTED WOULD NOT BY ITSELF REVIVE IT. MORE SENSITIVE ISSUE HERE, WHICH WOULD STIR PASSIONS, WOULD BE US ACTION TO EXCLUDE SOME LA FROM GSP BECAUSE OF AN INVESTMENT DISPUTE. GOA KNOWS ITS OWN VULNERABILITIES ON THIS SCORE AND WOULD REACT STRONGLY IF IT SAW ITSELF HEADED FOR CONFLICT WITH US ON THIS ISSUE.

COMMENT: ABOVE ANALYSIS ASSUMES THAT CURRENT INTERNAL CRISIS DOES NOT PRODUCE STRONG LEFTIST ORIENTATION IN GOA. THE COUNTRY WILL LIKELY MOVE TOWARD MORE CENTRIST POSITION IN REACTION TO STRONG RIGHTIST ORIENTATION IT ASSUMED UNDER LOPEZ REGA. IN THAT EVENT, ABOVE ISSUES COULD SERVE DOMESTIC NEEDS OF A NEW GOVERNMENT AND AT LEAST AT RHETORICAL LEVEL ISSUES WOULD RECEIVE GREATER ATTENTION.

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